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THE REICHSFORSCHUNGSAMT.

A. GENERAL.

1. The Reichsforschungsamt, or Forschungsamt des RLM, has been the subject of much confusion. This is partly the result of the extreme secrecy in which it worked, and partly of the loose terminology used. Thus the FA has been confused with several research (Forschung) departments with which it has in fact no connection, and particularly (and most naturally) with the central technical research office or Reichsforschungsrat, which later came under the Reichsluftministerium with the title Reichsstelle fuer Forschungsfuehrung des RLM. In fact the Forschungsamt is quite distinct from this office, and its confusing title should be regarded rather as a cover-name than as an indication of its functions.

2. Other reports have suggested, and it was at one time believed, that the FA was a secret cryptographical bureau of extraordinary ingenuity: but this also now seems to have been an error, perhaps due to the facts that the Luftwaffe had its own cryptographical service, and that the word Forschung has been used in this connection.

3. The following is a summary of such information about the Forschungsamt as is believed to be authentic by this office.

B. HISTORY and FUNCTIONS.

4. The Forschungsamt was an office of the Reichsluftministerium, and was known as Abteilung 4 of the RLM. Its connection with the RLM was however purely accidental, through the fact that it had been founded by, and had remained the personal province of, Hermann GOERING. It was founded in or shortly after 1933, and its principal and sole regular function was the tapping of telephone conversations, at first within the Reich, and later in occupied countries. It is said that GOERING's personal control of the FA was a serious loophole in HIMMLER's police system, and that the FA from time to time refused to monitor the telephone calls of persons whom GOERING had decided to protect. It is possible that its dependence on GOERING should be regarded as an historical survival from the time when, as Prime Minister of Prussia, GOERING exercised many of the repressive functions since centralised under HIMMLER.

5. The Monitoring of telephones can however produce intelligence of other than purely police interest: and it has been stated that at one time GOERING had plans to convert the FA into his own foreign intelligence service, comparable with the bureaux of RIBBENTROP and HIMMLER. These plans are said to have included the employment of Major I.G. (der L.W.) BREDE, an able officer who had been head of the Abw. Abt. I Luft, but had left the Abwehr in December 1942. This plan foundered: but the FA continued to collect every kind of intelligence, and was a supplier, not only of the RSHA, but also of the Auswaertiges Amt, the OKW, and the ministries of Economics and Propaganda; all of which had special officers appointed to deal with it. Indeed, competent sources have agreed that its most valuable work was for the Economics Ministry: and though one of its chiefs is said to have boasted that several anti-Nazi plots had

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roundly that, from the Gestapo point of view, the whole thing was a waste of time, since everyone in Germany believed the telephone to be tapped, and acted accordingly. In the sphere of political intelligence, it is claimed that the FA tapped all CHAMBERLAIN's conversations at the time of the Munich Conference; and an employee of the FA in France states that the line Paris - Vichy received particular attention, and that the communications of the U.S. Embassy at Vichy were tapped as a matter of course.

C. ORGANISATION.

6. Our knowledge of the organisation of the FA is very scanty. The Berlin HQ are said to have been (in October, 1944) in Schillerstrasse 116/124, Berlin-Charlottenburg 2. These HQ controlled regional areas of which one region is known to have consisted of North Western Europe (including Norway, Denmark and North Germany) with HQ at Hamburg and another of France and Belgium with HQ at Paris. Control by Berlin was highly centralised, and all instructions (except in case of danger to the Fuehrer or to Germany) had to come as orders from Berlin. Communications with the Berlin office were by secret cipher-teleprinter (G - Schreiber). Both civilian Reichsangestellten and service personnel were employed as officers in the FA, and monitoring personnel were drawn from OKH/Nachrichten/Dolmetscher-Ersatz, Abteilung, which also supplied interpreters and monitors to the Wehrmacht and the Abwehr.

D. REGIONAL AREAS.

7. The regional area for North Western Europe was controlled from Hamburg, where there was a Forschungsleitstelle (situated on the top floor of the Strafjustiz Gebaeude) controlling the following Forschungsstellen:

- Hamburg.
- Stettin
- Bremen
- Koeln-Deutz
- Dortmund
- Eutin
- Utlandshorn
- Copenhagen
- Oslo
- Trondhjem

The employees of this network were civilian Reichsangestellten, and were able to describe themselves as working for the RLM.

8. The regional area France/Belgium was controlled from Paris, from HQ in the Central Telephone Exchange, rue des Archives, and included the following numbered branch offices:-

- 1. Paris.
- 2. Nancy.
- 3. Lille.
- 4. Brussels.
- 5. Dijon.
- 6. Bayonne (a sub-office of Bordeaux).
- 7. Bordeaux.

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After the total occupation of France in December 1942, an eighth branch-office was established at Lyons, and a ninth planned (but never completed) at Marseilles. The military personnel of this network (there were also civilian Reichsangeestellten) were described as belonging to the 656 Fernspruchkompanie, whose FPN was 36065; and the entry in the Soldbuch was:-

15/Fuehrungs Nachrichten Regt. 40
Feldpost 36065.

9. Presumably the regional organisation in the South and East was on the same basis as in the West.

W.R.E.

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